

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2012 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 8

Summer Update # 1, Districts 1-6

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

2012 Chinook and Summer Chum Outlooks

The expected total Yukon River Chinook salmon run size is between 109,000 and 146,000 fish based on low productivity since 2007. Thus, the 2012 Yukon River Chinook salmon run size will likely be poor to below average, and conservation measures will be necessary to share the available harvest.

The 2012 summer chum salmon run size is anticipated to be 1.5-2 million fish. A run of this size should provide for escapement, a normal subsistence harvest, and a potential surplus of 500,000 - 1 million fish available for commercial harvest. Summer chum salmon runs have provided for a harvestable surplus in each of the last 9 years (2003–2011).

Management Strategies

Initial management will be based on preseason projections and shift to inseason run assessment as the runs develop.

The regulatory windowed subsistence salmon fishing schedule began May 31 in District Y-1 and is being implemented chronologically with the upriver migration.

To conserve Chinook salmon, subsistence fishing on the first pulse will be closed. Beginning in District Y-1 (and the northern portion of the Coastal District), one fishing period will be closed (approximately a 5-day closure) and this action will be similarly implemented in upriver fishing districts and subdistricts based on migratory timing.

Due to the considerable distance between the upper and lower boundaries in some districts and subdistricts, it is anticipated that these areas will be further subdivided and managed separately. If inseason assessment indicates Chinook salmon run strength continues to be poor after the first pulse closure, an additional subsistence fishing period may be closed or fishing time may be reduced.

In the sport fishery, retention of Chinook salmon will not be permitted in the mainstem Yukon River. In the Yukon River tributaries (excluding the Tanana River drainage) the Chinook salmon bag and possession limit will be reduced from three to one fish.

All Tanana River fisheries will be managed to meet Chinook salmon escapement goals for the Chena and Salcha rivers.

Chinook salmon directed commercial fishing is not anticipated.

A surplus of summer chum salmon is anticipated above escapement and subsistence needs. However, the extent of the summer chum salmon directed commercial fishery will be dependent upon the strength of the overlapping Chinook salmon run.

It is anticipated that the sale of incidentally harvested Chinook salmon during summer chum directed commercial fishing periods will be prohibited.

In Districts 1-6 and the Coastal District, which includes the villages of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay, a person may not take salmon with a gillnet that has a mesh size larger than 7.5 inches.

For detailed information on the 2012 Yukon Area Subsistence, Personal Use, and Commercial Salmon Fisheries Outlook and Management Strategies follow the link below.

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/FedAidpdfs/RIR.3A.2012.04.pdf>

Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon Test Fishery- 8.5 inch set net project/ADF&G, YDFDA

The LYTF set net project was fully operational at the Big Eddy location on May 31 and at the Middle Mouth location on June 3. The first Chinook salmon caught in the LYTF was recorded at the Big Eddy location on the morning of June 11. This is the latest initial catch recorded since 1992.

Additionally, test fishing for Chinook with 8.25 inch drift gillnet gear began June 3 at the Big Eddy location. No Chinook salmon have been caught through June 10.

Summer Chum Drift Test Fishery- 5.5 inch drift net project/ADFG, YDFDA

The summer chum drift project began fishing at Big Eddy location on June 3 and at Middle Mouth location on June 10. The first summer chum was caught in the test fishery June 9. The cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE through June 10 is 3.08.

Mountain Village Chinook Drift Test Fishery- 7.5 inch mesh drift net project/ADFG, ATC, YDFDA

The Mountain Village drift test fishery began June 7. The first Chinook salmon was caught in the test fishery June 10. The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE through June 10 is 1.46.

Pilot Station sonar project/ADFG, YDFDA

Sonar and test fishing are fully operational. The project began generating passage estimates on June 1. The first Chinook salmon caught by the Pilot Station sonar test fishery occurred June 10. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 22 fish through June 10. No summer chum have been caught to date.

NOTE: Other assessment projects will be added as they become operational.

Assessment

Ice break up in the lower river occurred on May 25. This is later than the average break up date of May 23. Coastal ice is still present near the river mouths. In the lower river, the water level continues to be high and the debris load is moderate.

The first reported Chinook and summer chum salmon caught in the subsistence fishery occurred on June 8 near the South Mouth coast. Subsistence salmon fishing effort in the lower river continues to be minimal.

Current Management

The current subsistence fishing schedules are as follows:

Coastal District: Subsistence salmon fishing is open seven days a week. In order to conserve Chinook salmon, gillnets will be restricted to a maximum mesh size of 6-inches from 12:00 noon June 6 until 12:00 noon June 12 in that portion of the Coastal District, from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62° North latitude, including the communities of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay.

The regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedule began May 31 in District 1 and is being implemented chronologically.

District 1: Subsistence salmon fishing in District 1 is open for two 36-hour periods per week from 8:00 p.m. Mondays until 8:00 a.m. Wednesdays and from 8:00 p.m. Thursdays until 8:00 a.m. Saturdays.

District 2: Subsistence salmon fishing in District 2 is open for two 36-hour periods per week from 8:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 8:00 a.m. Fridays and from 8:00 p.m. Sundays until 8:00 a.m. Tuesdays.

District 3: Subsistence salmon fishing in District 3 is open for two 36-hour periods per week from 8:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 8:00 a.m. Fridays and from 8:00 p.m. Sundays until 8:00 a.m. Tuesdays.

Subdistrict Y-4A will close at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 12 and then reopen 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 13. The Subdistrict Y-4A regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedule consists of two 48-hour fishing periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 6:00 p.m. Fridays.

Subdistricts Y-4B&C will close at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 19 and then reopen 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 20. Subdistricts Y-4B&C regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedule consists of two 48-hour open fishing periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 6:00 p.m. Fridays.

Subdistricts Y-5A,B&C: Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open seven days per week, 24 hours a day until the regulatory fishing schedule is implemented. Subdistricts Y-5A,B&C will close at 6:00 p.m. Sunday, June 24 and then reopen 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 26. Subdistricts Y-5A,B&C regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedule consists of two 48-hour fishing periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Thursdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays.

Subdistrict 5D: Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open seven days per week, 24 hours a day.

District 6: The subsistence salmon fishing schedule consists of two 42-hour fishing periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays.

The Old Minto Area: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays.

The Innoko River: Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open seven days per week, 24 hours a day.

The Koyukuk River: Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open seven days per week, 24 hours a day.

Recorded fishery announcements and updates will be available 24 hours a day at 949-1731 or 1-866-479-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the Emmonak ADF&G office at 949-1320. The Emmonak ADF&G office will stand by on VHF channel 7A.